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1962/10/25

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October 25, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

SUBJECT: Notes on Leadership Meeting on October 24th, 1962, at 5:00 p.m.

Attended by: Congressional Leadership (except Senator Hayden), the President, Rusk, McNamara, McCone and Robert Lovett.

McCone gave a brief intelligence summary, copy attached.

Secretary Rusk reported on the United Nations, stated there is no confirmed Soviet reaction or statement of intentions but discussed exchange with Bertrand Russell and dismissed this as unofficial. The President categorically stated on several occasions through the meeting there was no formal or informal direct approach for a Kennedy/Khrushchev meeting and no negotiations toward that end.

McNamara reported on military operations, stated that as of this hour there had been "no interceptions of Soviet ships; none were necessary." McNamara very carefully avoided any statements that ships had turned around. (Note: McNamara's statements were not consistent with reports that an intercept had been attempted at 10:35 a.m. with the KIMOVSK, and that the ship had turned around when confronted by a Navy vessel).

Mansfield spoke of the importance of confidential nature of the meeting, referring to Roland Evans' article in the Herald Tribune which summarized in accurate detail views of all who attended the prior meeting. It was the consensus that the discussions at leadership meetings must be kept most confidential.

Russell complimented Secretary Rusk on the unanimous OAS action and his unusually complimentary remarks were strongly supported by Dirksen, Hickenlooper and Mansfield.

Rusk then reported that Secretary General U Thant would issue a statement calling for a two-week moratorium. There was no conclusion as to the United States answer.

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Dirksen then brought up the question of a Summit meeting, stating that he felt such a confrontation between Khrushchev and Kennedy at this moment would be useless unless ground rules were established indicating that constructive results would develop. The President agreed; stated that we must now wait until the confrontation of the ships and that the next 24 hours will bring out important developments.

McCone was then questioned concerning certain intelligence matters.

[REDACTED] Smathers questioned about reported Cuban orders not to shoot unless attacked. McCone stated that this information had come through intelligence channels and seemed to be correct. Smathers then asked regarding Cuban known missile sites. McCone replied the Cubans were excluded except for camp construction and then it was reported they were kept under careful surveillance.

Fulbright questioned McNamara at some length concerning his preparations for invasion and asked specifically whether all steps were taken so that an invasion could be initiated in a minimum time.

McNamara stated that all preliminary steps were being taken, outlining some of the details, but not many of them; that preparations were being made so that an invasion could be accomplished with the 7-day lead time discussed at previous meetings.

Meeting adjourned, the President seeking agreement that the leadership would remain on 8-hour alert.

John A. McCone
Director

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